



ASEM Education Expert Group

Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence

Terms of References

Expert Group
Expert Group Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (EG4)
Working Period
The Expert Group was initiated at a kick-off meeting in December 2019 in Berlin, Germany. The current working period will continue until ASEMME10 in 2026.
Contact Persons
– David Akrami Flores, Head of Section Erasmus+ Policy Support, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – Stefanie Engert, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
Composition/ Participating Countries and Organisations
– Coordinator: DAAD (Germany) – Members: All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE); Artevelde University of Applied Sciences (Belgium); ASEAN Secretariat; ASEM Education Secretariat (AES); Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF); Beijing Normal University (China); Dania Academy (Denmark); Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (Ireland); Erasmus Student Network (ESN); European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; European Students' Union (ESU), European Training Foundation (ETF); European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); European University Association (EUA); Further & Higher Education Authority (Malta); Ghent University (Belgium); Groningen Declaration Network (Netherlands); Hangzhou Normal University (China); Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA); International Association of Universities (IAU); King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Thailand); Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat (India); Ministry of Education (Brunei Darussalam, India, Romania, Thailand); Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Austria); Ministry of Education and Science (Bulgaria, Mongolia); Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Indonesia); Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (Cyprus); Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (France); Ministry of National Resources and Education (Hungary); Ministry of Science and Higher Education (Kazakhstan); Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (Portugal); SEAMEO RIHED; UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training; UNESCO-UNEVOC Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project; University Politehnica of Bucharest (Romania)

Reference to Policy Background Papers

Chair's Conclusions ASEMME9 (Malta, January 2024)

- The Ministerial meeting acknowledged the efforts made to explore and discuss new developments, challenges and opportunities around digitalisation, such as generative Artificial Intelligence, Micro-credentials and other emerging topics. The Ministers underlined the importance and relevance of continued dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation in education and the exchange of good practices in digitally enhanced learning and teaching and concluded that the Expert Group 4 on Digitalisation, chaired by Germany, should continue to underpin the policy dialogue on these issues, building on international instruments such as UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on Ethics and Artificial Intelligence.

Chair's Conclusions ASEMME8 (Bangkok, December 2021)

- In their meeting, the Ministers reiterated that 'digitalisation' can create opportunities to support connectivity and collaboration between Asia and Europe. The Ministers acknowledged that incorporating digital tools in education has been vital in ensuring continuity of support to learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the pandemic has shown that digital inequality prevails, excluding learners from digitally enhanced education (...) The Ministers emphasized that a continued dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation in education and the exchange of good practices in digitally enhanced education is important and should be continued. (No. 14)

Chair's Conclusions ASEMME7 (Bucharest, May 2019)

- The Ministers underlined that "Digitalisation" can create opportunities to support connectivity and collaboration between Asia and Europe and that the ASEM Education Process should adapt itself to the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation and the 4th Industrial Revolution. Therefore, the Ministers welcomed the suggestion to include "Digitalisation" as a second transversal theme (besides Sustainable Development) within the 4 priority areas of the ASEM Education Process. (No. 13)
- Ministers invited Senior Officials to establish an expert group on the transversal topic on digitalisation in order to foster dialogue and synergies on activities in the field of digital learning and teaching. The Ministers thank Germany for the initiative. (No. 55)

Seoul Declaration (ASEMME6, Seoul, 2017)

- Taking note of the great potential of ICT – Information and Communication Technologies – as a useful tool for education innovation, we declare our support for stronger collaboration, in particular, to help close the education gap between different regions and countries and address the SDG – Sustainable Development Goals – challenges and global issues, such as equity and accessibility in education. By using OER – Open Educational Resources – we will strive to promote the use and sharing of quality teaching and learning materials. We also urge our ASEM partners to use ICT as a tool to innovate teaching and learning practices. For example, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) can increase access to education, while smart learning analytics platform can provide tailored education to learners in line with their level of understanding. Concerned with the possibility that a gap in ICT use may cause more serious social polarisation in the future, we intend to explore possibilities of resolving this issue by joint efforts and we are ready to discuss credit transfer and recognition issues related to the use of ICT in education.

State of Play

- At ASEMME7 in Bucharest, Romania (May 2019), the Ministers have adopted "digitalisation" as a transversal theme, as it effects all four priorities (quality assurance and

recognition; engaging business and industry in education; balanced mobility; lifelong learning including TVET) of the ASEM Education Process. – At the virtual ASEMME8 in Bangkok, Thailand (December 2021) the Education Ministers adopted the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and the corresponding Action Plan for the ASEM Education Process until 2030. The strategy aims at supporting a more prosperous, resilient and sustainable Asia-Europe education region, deepening collaboration between the two regions and promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and training. The digital transformation, as a transversal theme, is addressed by the strategic objectives in the strategy. The strategic objectives highlight the importance of promoting and supporting virtual mobility and exchanges, fostering digital skills and promoting exchange on quality assurance, validation and recognition of virtual and blended learning formats as well as digital credentials. – At the ISOM in Bangkok, Thailand (November 2024), it was decided to change the name of the Expert Group to “Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence”. – As of January 2025, the EG has come together for ten meetings in total (December 2019; June 2020; February and August 2021; March and December 2022; May and September 2023; April and October 2024). Following a decision taken by the SOM1 in 2023, the EG organized a public online seminar on “The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Learning and Teaching in Higher Education” in November 2023. A second online seminar followed, upon the EG’s own initiative, in November 2024, addressing “Best Practices on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education”. – The EG Digitalisation has published a Working Paper which was presented to the Senior Officials at SOM2 in December 2021 and acknowledged by the Ministers of Education in the Chair’s Conclusions of ASEMME8. The paper looks at challenges and opportunities of digitalisation, enabled or facilitated in the sphere of education, and advises ASEM policymakers on key issues that need to be addressed to transform education and make it more flexible to respond to current and future demands. The Working Paper of the EG Digitalisation is structured along four thematic priorities: 1.) digital infrastructure, 2.) international exchange and mobility, 3.) futures of (lifelong) learning, and 4.) quality assurance and recognition.
Target Group
Target Group – academic experts (from universities and research institutes) – digitalisation experts (from governments, NGOs involved in education) – representatives from student bodies Appointing the Experts – each ASEM member state/ stakeholder participating in the Expert Group is responsible for identifying and recruiting experts from their respective country/ organisation
Purpose and Intended Outcome
Purpose – <u>Foster dialogue</u> on the potential of digitalisation in (higher) education with specific regard to the four priorities of the ASEM Education Process as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. – <u>Promote peer learning</u> among the appointed experts of both regions. – <u>Strengthen collaboration and connectivity</u> by identifying, sharing and promoting good practices of digitally enhanced education cooperation between Asia and Europe. – <u>Complementing the work of other ASEM expert groups</u> by providing expertise in the field of digital transformation. Intended Outcome

- Establishment of a pool of experts on the digital transformation in (higher) education specifically working within the ASEM context.
- A portfolio of good practice examples on digitally enhanced education cooperation between Asia and Europe, which serve as a knowledge basis for further collaborations between the two regions.
- Contributing to outcome documents of political meetings (SOM and ASEMME).

Intended Schedule	
Meeting of the EG Digitalisation <i>SOM1</i>	Spring 2025 <i>November 2025</i>
Online Seminar (topic tbc)	Summer 2025
Meeting of the EG Digitalisation	Autumn 2025
Meeting of the EG Digitalisation	Spring 2026
Meeting of the EG Digitalisation <i>SOM2/ ASEMME10</i>	Autumn 2026 <i>2026 (Date tbc)</i>
Additional Remarks	
– DAAD (Germany) will be coordinating the Expert Group in close cooperation with the ASEM Education Secretariat. – The participating countries and organisations discussed and finalised the initial version of these Terms of References (ToR) and agreed on the Expert Group's operating principles in the Meeting of March 2022. – An updated version of these ToR (streamlining with the new Expert Groups, update of composition; but no change to content and format) was prepared by the Chair and adopted by the expert group's members in January 2024. – An updated version of these ToR (adaption of the name change of the EG, following the decision taken at ISOM Bangkok (November 2024) and update of composition; but no change to content and format) was prepared by the Chair and adopted by the expert group's members in January 2025.	
Reporting	
– The Chair reports progress to the ASEM partners and stakeholders at Intermediate Senior Officials' Meetings (ISOM) and Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM1 & SOM2). – The minutes of this EG's meetings are in the responsibility of the Chair.	